

Protect Your Hands From Hazards

You probably take your hands for granted until you have an injury. Then you'll know just how difficult life can be without the full use of your hands.

In the workplace there are many hazards to your hand safety. Equipment which cuts and crushes materials can also mangle hands. There are rough surfaces which can scrape the skin. Hot and cold materials can cause thermal burns. Chemicals can corrode the skin or enter the body through the skin and cause poisoning. Infectious materials can cause disease. Electrical current which contacts the skin can cause fatal shocks. Other types of hand injuries are caused over a period of time — by impact, strain or vibration.

To protect yourself against hand hazards, it is important to select the right kind of Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves. Ask your safety supervisor for guidance in choosing and fitting gloves.

Gloves made of different materials protect against different hazards. For instance, leather gloves can help protect against scrapes and

splinters and might be worn in a materials handling job. Gloves and sleeves with a metal mesh reinforcement can protect against cuts and would be worn in a food processing plant where the worker is using knives. Special rubber gloves can provide protection against electrical shock and could be worn around electrical installations. Fabric containing aluminum insulates against heat for work settings such as foundries. Gloves made of rubber or certain synthetic materials can provide protection against certain chemicals. It is important to choose gloves made of the right material for protection against chemicals. The chemical could leak through the wrong material.

In addition to gloves, there are special sleeves, cuffs, mitts and finger guards for certain hazards.

Besides wearing the right Personal Protective Equipment for your hands, there are some other things you can do to maintain hand safety on the job:

- Use care when working around moving equipment, as well as power or hand tools. Use machine guards correctly to

prevent contact with moving parts or stock.

- There are many situations when you are working around moving equipment when you should NOT wear gloves, because of the danger of entanglement. For the same reason, you should not wear loose clothing or jewelry which can become entangled in machinery.

- Certain injuries can develop over a period of time. They are caused by repetitive strain, or by repeated impact or vibration. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is a common example of such an injury. It occurs when the worker performs the same hand motions all day, as in the case of a computer keyboard operator or an assembly worker. To help to prevent these injuries, keep your hands and wrists in a comfortable "neutral" position. Take frequent short rest breaks to relax your hands and wrists. Use tools which are specially designed to prevent repetitive strain and impact.

Your hands make it possible for you to work, so take good care of them!

... safety ...

hand protection

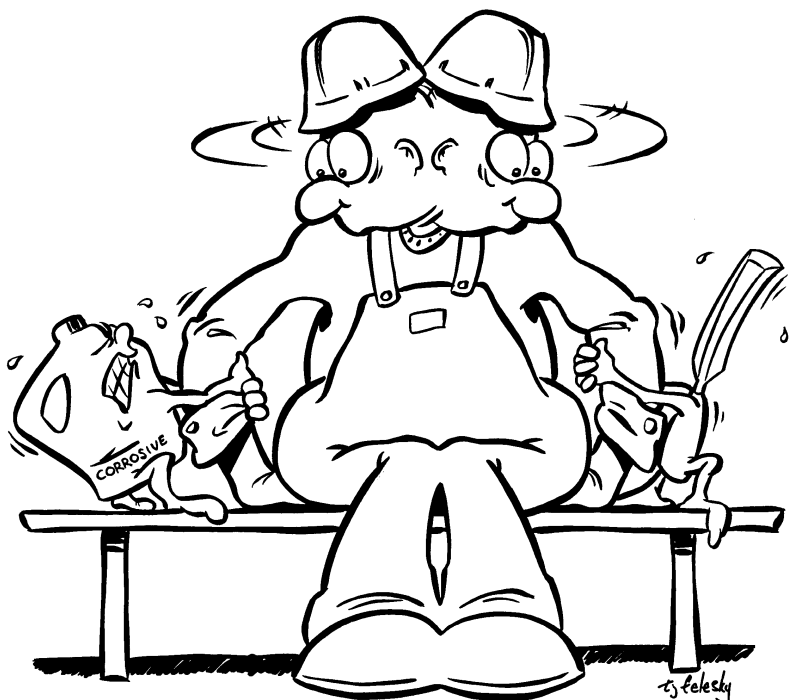
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